

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A safety indwelling needle, comprised of a metallic inner needle which pierces a skin of a patient and reaches a blood vessel; and a soft outer needle which is located outside the inner needle and places within the blood vessel, comprising:
  - a holder sleeve having a retracting mechanism which can hold the inner needle after a puncture, from a proximal end to a distal end thereof and does not hold the outer needle, characterized in that
    - the retracting mechanism includes: an urging means for urging the inner needle to a side opposite to the outer needle with respect to an axial direction of the holder sleeve; an actuator which moves together with the inner needle when it is withdrawn and has a puncture position retainer for keeping the inner and outer needles ready for the puncture and an inner needle retraction actuating portion for allowing for the retraction actuation of the inner needle; and a slit formed in the holder sleeve for assuring a movement path of the actuator,
    - the urging means is a biasing element that applies a biasing force to the actuator,
    - the inner needle retraction actuating portion is positioned at an outside of the holder sleeve through the slit when the inner and outer needles are readied for the puncture.
    - the puncture position retainer has a puncture position engagement portion whereby the actuator is engaged with the holder sleeve at a position on an outer needle side,
    - the inner needle retraction actuating portion has an actuating portion for releasing the actuator from an engaged state of the puncture position engagement portion into an urged state by the urging means, and
    - the retracting mechanism has an actuating portion housing for enclosing the inner needle retraction actuating portion when the inner

needle retraction actuating portion biasedly retracts within and underneath a protective cover portion of the actuating portion housing to prevent both ends of the actuator from being freely accessible resulting in the actuating portion housing preventing the inner needle retraction actuating portion from coming into contact with a hand after retraction of the inner needle.

2. (Currently Amended) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the actuator housing portion is constructed of wall portions formed standing at both sides of the slit in the holder sleeve on the side opposite to the outer needle and [[a]] the protective cover portion joining the edges of the wall portions.
3. (Original) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 2, wherein the protective cover portion is formed so as to function as a tail plug for closing an opening of the holder sleeve on the side opposite to the outer needle.
4. (Previously Presented) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the retracting mechanism has a stopper for arresting the inner needle moved to the side of the holder sleeve opposite to the outer needle, the stopper includes arrest engagements for stopping the inner needle stored in the holder sleeve relative to the holder sleeve.
5. (Previously Presented) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein, on the outer needle side of the holder sleeve, a grip portion to be held when the outer and inner needles are punctured into the skin of the patient is formed at a position other than a position where the actuating portion of the actuator is arranged.

6. (Previously Presented) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, further comprising a cap which covers the outer and inner needles while keeping them ready for puncture and disables the function of the actuating portion.
7. (Currently Amended) A safety indwelling needle, comprised of a metallic inner needle which pierces a skin of a patient and reaches a blood vessel; and a soft outer needle which is located outside the inner needle and placed within the blood vessel, comprising:

a holder sleeve having a retracting mechanism which can hold the inner needle after a puncture, from a proximal end to a distal end thereof and does not hold the outer needle, characterized in that

the retracting mechanism includes: a coil spring for urging the inner needle to a side opposite to the outer needle with respect to an axial direction of the holder sleeve; an actuator which is arranged between the coil spring and the inner needle, moves together with the inner needle when it is withdrawn and has a puncture position retainer for keeping the inner and outer needles ready for the puncture and an inner needle retraction actuating portion for allowing a withdrawal actuation of the inner needle; a slit formed in the holder sleeve for assuring a movement path of the actuator; an actuating portion housing for enclosing the inner needle retraction actuating portion when the inner needle retraction actuating portion biasedly retracts within and underneath a protective cover portion of the actuating portion housing to prevent both ends of the actuator from being freely accessible resulting in the actuating portion housing preventing the inner needle retraction actuating portion from coming into contact with a hand after retraction of the inner needle; and a stopper for stopping the inner needle, having been moved to a rear side with respect to the axial direction of the holder sleeve,

the inner needle retraction actuating portion is positioned at an

outside of the holder sleeve through the slit when the inner and outer needles are readied for the puncture,

the puncture position retainer has a puncture position engagement portion whereby the actuator is engaged with the holder sleeve at a position on an outer needle side and an engaged state can be released,

the inner needle retraction actuating portion includes: an actuating portion for releasing the actuator from the engaged state of the puncture position engagement portion into an urged state by the coil spring,

the actuator housing portion is constructed of wall portions standing at both sides of the slit in the holder sleeve on the side opposite to the outer needle and a protective cover portion joining the edges of the wall portions, the protective cover portion being formed so as to function as a tail plug for closing an opening of the holder sleeve on the side opposite to the outer needle, and

the stopper includes arrest engagements for stopping the inner needle held in the holder sleeve relative to the holder sleeve.

8. (Currently Amended) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the puncture position retainer is projected outward of holder sleeve through the slit, and

the puncture position engagement portion is engaged with [[a]]  
an engagement window provided on an outer surface of the holder sleeve.

9. (Previously Presented) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 7, wherein the puncture position retainer is projected outward of holder sleeve through the slit, and

the puncture position engagement portion is engaged with an engagement window provided on an outer surface of the holder sleeve.

10. (Previously Presented) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the biasing element is in a compressed state when the inner needle is retracted.
11. (Previously Presented) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 7, wherein the coil spring is in a compressed state when the inner needle is retracted.
12. (New) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the protective cover portion has a length that is greater than the length of the inner needle retraction actuating portion such that a free end of the protective cover portion extends beyond the inner needle retraction actuating portion so as to completely cover the inner needle retraction actuating portion.
13. (New) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the housing is constructed such that lateral access to and access to the inner needle retraction actuating portion from above are prevented.
14. (New) The safety indwelling needle according to Claim 1, wherein the protective cover portion extends above and across a length of an outer surface of the holder sleeve.
15. (New) A safety indwelling needle, comprised of a metallic inner needle which pierces a skin of a patient and reaches a blood vessel; and a soft outer needle which is located outside the inner needle and places within the blood vessel, comprising:  
a holder sleeve having a retracting mechanism which can hold the inner needle after a puncture, from a proximal end to a distal end

thereof and does not hold the outer needle, characterized in that

the retracting mechanism includes: an urging means for urging the inner needle to a side opposite to the outer needle with respect to an axial direction of the holder sleeve; an actuator which moves together with the inner needle when it is withdrawn and has a puncture position retainer for keeping the inner and outer needles ready for the puncture and an inner needle retraction actuating portion for allowing for the retraction actuation of the inner needle; and a slit formed in the holder sleeve for assuring a movement path of the actuator,

the urging means is a biasing element that applies a biasing force to the actuator,

the inner needle retraction actuating portion is positioned at an outside of the holder sleeve through the slit when the inner and outer needles are readied for the puncture,

the puncture position retainer has a puncture position engagement portion whereby the actuator is engaged with the holder sleeve at a position on an outer needle side,

the inner needle retraction actuating portion has an actuating portion for releasing the actuator from an engaged state of the puncture position engagement portion into an urged state by the urging means, and

the retracting mechanism has an actuating portion housing that includes a structure that extends the length of the inner needle retraction actuating portion when the inner needle retraction actuating portion retracts within the actuating portion housing such that a free end of the structure extends beyond the inner needle retraction actuating portion so as to completely cover the inner needle retraction actuating portion, thereby preventing the inner needle retraction actuating portion from coming into contact with a hand after retraction of the inner needle.